



## Dealing with Radicalization in IDP Camps

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# What is NSI Reachback?

The Joint Staff, Deputy Director for Global Operations (DDGO), jointly with other elements in the Joint Staff, Services, and United States Government (USG) Agencies, has established a Reachback capability based on the Strategic Multilayer Assessment (SMA) team’s global network of scholars and area experts. It provides Combatant Commands with population-based and regional expertise in support of ongoing operations. The Reachback team combines written and interview elicitations with additional research and analyses to provide concise responses to time-sensitive questions.

This report responds to one of a series of questions posed by USCENTCOM about the strategic implications of destabilizing population dynamics within the Central Region.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Please contact Sarah Canna (scanna@nsiteam.com or sarah.a.canna.ctr@mail.mil) for more details related to SMA’s “Assessment of Strategic Implications of Population Dynamics in the Central Region” study.

## Question of Focus

**[B5]** How do you protect an at-risk population from extremism in an IDP/refugee camp? How do you build community resilience to help prevent radicalization? How do you triage and segregate persons in IDP/refugee camps that have varying degrees of radicalization?

### Dealing with Radicalization in IDP Camps<sup>2</sup>

The Middle Eastern region of the USCENTCOM area of responsibility (AOR) currently has approximately 20 million displaced persons, many of whom live in camps (see NSI Reachback question B3 response). These people have been uprooted, lost their livelihoods, and in many cases experienced severe trauma. These stresses place them at risk of radicalization as their frustrations and grievances increase with time. Research was conducted on counter-radicalization and deradicalization programs appropriate for use in refugee camps, returning a broad range of counter-radicalization measures, and screening and segregation protocols. Their validity, respective pros and cons, and implementation considerations are reported here. Determining the appropriate measures for protecting refugees, building community resilience, and triaging individuals who would most benefit from deradicalization programs can inform how USCENTCOM can take action, or support organizations that are engaged with deradicalization in refugee camps.

We used the following definitions of key terms throughout the report.

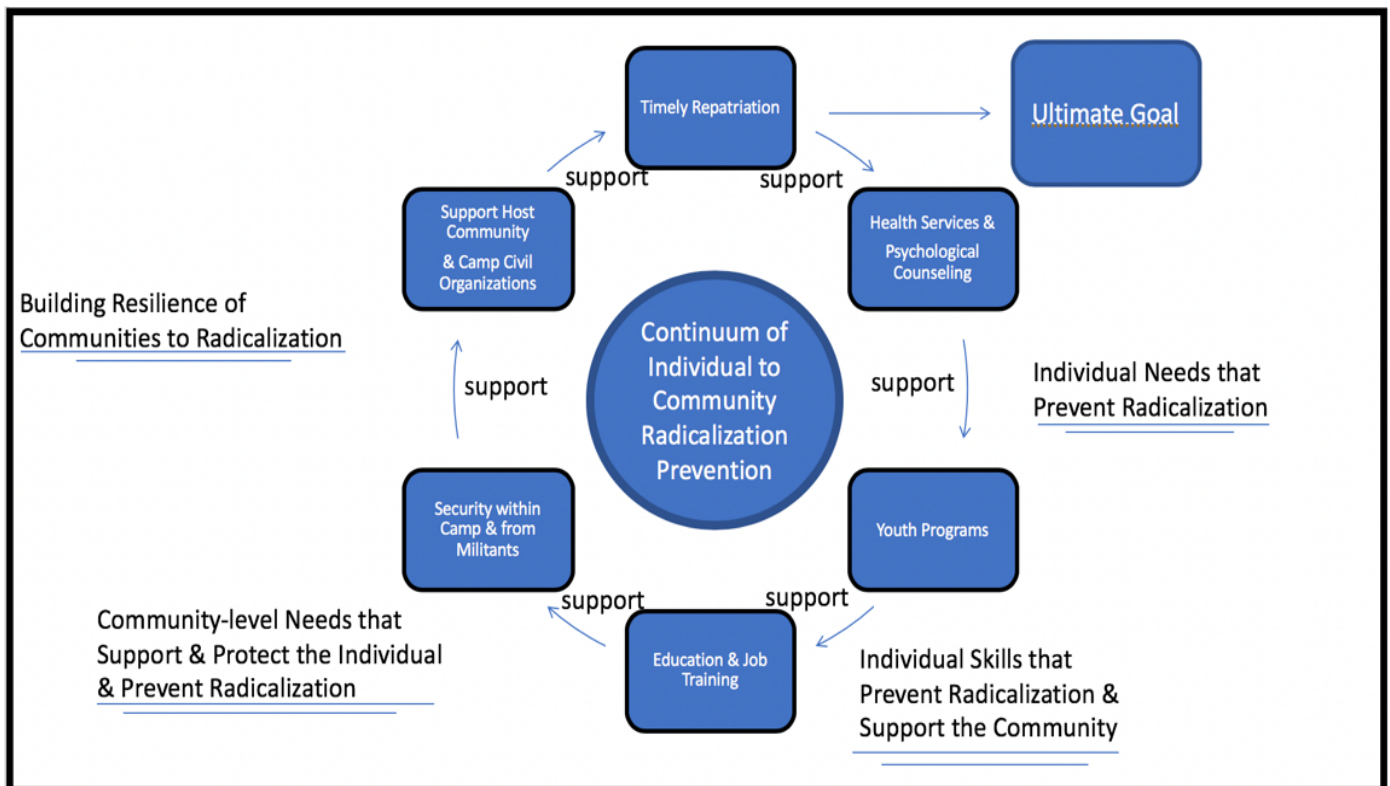
- **Radicalization** refers to a process whereby individuals (and even groups) develop a mindset that can, under the right circumstances and opportunities, increase the risk that he or she will engage in violent extremism or terrorism (Clutterbuck, 2015).
- **Deradicalization** implies that an individual change his or her thought and values toward more mainstream views. Actually changing one's views and assessing one's values is extremely difficult and presents ethical issues in light of US principles of freedom of conscience. A more achievable and less problematic goal is **disengagement**, which is a shift away from supporting violence as a means for achieving political or ideological goals; a person may retain radical views, but violent behavior, which is observable, can be mitigated. As a further consideration, much of what is addressed in this report is more properly defined as **counter-radicalization**, efforts to counter and prevent radicalization efforts by militants. Unfortunately, the term deradicalization is often used in research and policy variously to mean deradicalization, disengagement, and counter-radicalization. These distinctions will be made when possible in this report (Horgan, 2009; Clutterbuck, 2015).

The summarized, overall findings of this report are as follows:

1. An integrated system of interventions addressing individual through community needs is necessary for effective counter-radicalization and deradicalization efforts, bearing in mind that the primary goal is disengagement from violence (see Figure 1). Such an integrated system addresses deradicalization and disengagement at multiple social scales, enabling protection of individual refugees from radicalization up through building community resilience against radicalization.

<sup>2</sup> The following subject matter experts kindly contributed to this analysis: **Basma Alloush** (Norwegian Refugee Council), **Dr. Mia Bloom** (Georgia State University), and **Dr. Siobhan O'Neil** (United Nations University).

2. Limiting the time spent in a camp setting is key to preventing the long-term radicalization of refugees. The average time refugees spend in camp is seventeen years, enough time for a generation to grow up with deep resentment and grievance that militants can use for radicalizing a population.
3. Screening instruments exist for triaging an individual's degree of radicalization and propensity for violence. However, they are useful only in the hands of trained professionals.
4. One consideration concerning triage is the extent to which radicalized individuals and groups should be segregated from, versus dispersed into, the general population. There are pros and cons to each approach, and each has its associated ethical dilemmas. The competing benefits and risks need to be weighed when deciding what degree of separation or dispersal is appropriate for a particular camp; this report provides guidelines for weighing the pros and cons.



*Figure 1. System of Counter-Radicalization and Deradicalization Efforts*

Drivers of radicalization occur in layers from the individual level up to the wider community that are mutually influencing. As a result, deradicalization and disengagement interventions designed to protect refugees from and build community resilience to radicalization must address these levels in mutually supportive ways. Consequently, this report will be structured as follows: The first two parts of the question of focus are answered in Section I, which addresses deradicalization and disengagement efforts. The third part of the question is answered in Section II, which describes practical matters of screening refugees and managing camps through segregation and dispersal mechanisms.

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## Section I: The Layers of Counter-Radicalization and Deradicalization

Each country's refugee population is as different as the conflict or natural disaster that displaced it and, therefore, deradicalization and disengagement programs must be tailored to its specific context (El Said, 2015; Neumann, 2015). However, several common factors affect refugee population vulnerability to radicalization such as host country politics, health needs, youth security, economic opportunities, and in-camp civilian organizations (Sude et al., 2015). These factors range from those that impact the individual to those that impact whole communities. For instance, it is widely acknowledged that poor and often crowded living conditions at refugee camps negatively affect refugees' physical and psychological health and inhibit economic opportunities, and these conditions create grievances that place refugees at risk of radicalization (Beydoun et al., 2010; Comerford, 2017; Dot-Poulliard, 2013; Francis, 2015; Psaltis et al., 2019). Counter-radicalization and deradicalization efforts must address each. For example, psychological counseling and healthcare are very much focused on the individual. Efforts such as religious counseling involve scholars with credibility in the community and may be done one-on-one or in group settings to take advantage of the social dynamics of shared values. Security efforts are aimed at whole communities, as is the organization of camp residents in civil society organizations to assist in camp administration and the peaceful airing of grievances. These interventions should logically reinforce one another. Well-adjusted, healthy individuals who feel safe are less likely to radicalize and should be in better positions to play productive roles in camp social life. Well-functioning refugee organizations in camp should lead to better care of individual needs, alleviating grievances that might lead to radicalization. The ultimate goal of most camps, repatriation and resettlement, should alleviate stresses of camp life and ultimately eliminate the need for the camp altogether.

The remainder of this section will address typical interventions for the youth population, health, education, and jobs, and the need for these interventions and how they counter radicalization.

### Individual Physical and Psychological Health Services

Medical care is a basic need, yet due to cost and availability, is especially difficult to provide for refugees. Lack of adequate medical care is a common complaint of refugees worldwide, creating grievances that may form the basis for radicalization (Mitchell, 2019). In some cases, healthcare is critically absent, making the potential for radicalization even greater. The al-Hawl refugee camp in Syria is a good example. According to a July 2019 report by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), hospitals and medical facilities are "understaffed and under-resourced" (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Additional facilities operated by Doctors Without Borders and the International Committee of the Red Cross are also constrained by staffing and security issues (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

Exacerbating the medical care issue, the years of trauma experienced by refugees has created a severe mental health crisis that authorities have been unable to address (Percy, 2019). Psychological health services to help children who grow up in war torn regions to cope with atrocities they have witnessed is especially crucial. According to one observer, "no psychological services are available for these children who have been exposed to all levels of violence, let alone deradicalization programs for those educated in the Islamic State's system from 2013 to 2019" (Zelin, 2019).

Provisioning physical and psychological health services is not only a humanitarian concern, it supports counter-radicalization and deradicalization efforts by eliminating grievances based on lack of health services and by addressing psychological trauma that may place people at risk of radicalization (Bloom, 2019). For instance, the Syria International NGO Regional Forum reports that psychological counseling, creation of child-friendly spaces, and providing parental support led to a reduction in aggression amongst children and mothers at al-Hawl camp in Syria (Kelly, 2019).

## Youth Vulnerability

Youth are identified throughout the literature as especially vulnerable to radicalization (Beydoun et.al., 2010; Carrera et.al., 2015; Leenders, 2009; Lischer, 2001), either from parents or authority figures (Zelin, 2019) or from online outreach (Liang, 2015). Protecting the youth of an at-risk population is paramount, as they could provide soldiers for militant groups or VEOs for years to come.

Most of the programs designed to prevent radicalization among youth populations rely on educational initiatives designed to prevent children from participating in anti-social behavior such as gang-related activity and participation in violent extremist organizations (Aly, 2014; Berti, 2015). Most programs place an emphasis on teaching young adults and children cognitive and emotional skills, including empathy, which allows them to impose self-sanctions and assist peers who are showing signs of radicalization (Aly, 2014). However, Berti (2015) cautions that most of these programs are designed for and implemented in wealthy Western school systems and may not generalize to refugee children in the Middle East.

There are some educational initiatives, however, in Middle Eastern and North African refugee camps that provide some guidance for how disengagement and deradicalization can be adapted outside of the West. Women in Algeria's refugee camps established the National Union of Sahrawi Women, which supports the camp's health and education systems<sup>3</sup> (Jiménez Sánchez, 2016). While the National Union of Sahrawi Women generated positive results in literacy rates, evidence that educational programs generally have a meaningful impact on youth radicalization is inconclusive, especially in the wake of attacks carried out by well-educated youth in the United Kingdom and the United States (Aly, 2014; Bhui, 2012). Bloom (2019) cites the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) as an example of a multinational consortium of anti-radicalization groups that cooperate to share best practices (WASL, 2016). The Dadaab camp in Kenya provides an interesting analogue for residents of al-Hawl. Comerford (2017) claims that classes in moderate Islamic studies successfully countered extremist or militant interpretations of Islam and increased tolerance of different cultures and religions. However, as with all programming, adapting components (where necessary) to a local context is critical (El Said, 2015); additionally, claims of success are subjective and often mixed (Neumann, 2010). The necessity and value of access to education in refugee context was reinforced by interviews with subject matter experts (Alloush, 2019; Bloom, 2019).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The National Union of Sahrawi Women successfully inverted the literacy rate within the camps from 90 percent illiteracy to a 95 percent literacy rate and 100 percent literacy rate among schoolchildren.

<sup>4</sup> For further discussion of youth deradicalization see the NSI Reachback Question B1 report. Please contact George Popp at [gpopp@nsiteam.com](mailto:gpopp@nsiteam.com) for a copy of the report.

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## Job Training

While most of the initiatives put in place to protect at-risk populations are education-based and often target youth (Aly, 2014), adult refugee populations can also be given tools to protect against radicalization. The loss of socioeconomic standing that many refugees feel can lead to depression and other psychological issues including a loss of hope for the future (Nwaleiji & Oyebanjo, 2019). New economic and job-related opportunities are proposed as a remedy to this loss of hope (Bhui, 2012; Haddad Kreidie & Itani, 2016). MacBride (2016) argues that if refugees and internally displaced persons are given a way to financially provide for themselves and their families, their safety, security, and resiliency will increase. MacBride further argues that giving cash to refugees, which can be saved and used for their future, will have longer-lasting counter-radicalization effects and will give them a better chance to start over than the current material donations of rice and clothes. There is some evidence that giving cash to refugees in camps may be successful at countering radicalization. According to a 2019 UNHCR report in the thirty-three countries that use cash-based intervention (CBI), making cash available to refugees both in and outside of camps has lessened risky coping mechanisms used by refugees that includes survival sex and child labor (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019).

Experts emphasize, however, that making money or resources available in refugee camps is not enough. There is a strong necessity of continued activity for camp residents to confer a sense of purpose and combat boredom (Alloush, 2019; Bloom, 2019). If conducted effectively, even very basic and common activities can provide a pathway towards deradicalization (Kelly, 2019). Education and job training appear to operate against radicalization through similar mechanisms; if people have some sense of control over their lives (money), hope for the future (money, education, training), and something to do with their time (education, training, work), they are less vulnerable to radicalization.

A possible benefit of vocational training and employment that may be under-appreciated by Western observers is that work is commonly regarded as a form of worship and personal spiritual growth in Islam (Ali, 2008). It is not enough to avoid idleness, a good Muslim seeks productive labor. An often-quoted Hadith is from Sahih Bukhari, "There are two blessings many people waste: good health and free time." Therefore, vocational programs may occupy time, provide skills and livelihood, and be particularly meaningful to the majority Muslim populations in Middle Eastern camps.

The net effect of education and job training is not simply improving individuals, but creating a community of empowered and hopeful people more resilient to radicalization and more capable of creating livable conditions in what is hopefully a non-permanent residence in refugee camps. This resiliency emerges from being occupied, feeling purposeful, and therefore not needing to seek radical identities for purpose. This generates a sense of dignity and self-reliance, minimizing grievances.

## Community Security and Support

The camp is a community embedded in a host community and a larger society. Security must be provided to all of these communities, and efforts to counter radicalization must involve these social layers because they reciprocally support efforts focused on individuals and vice versa. For instance, security protects individuals and provides them with a personal sense of well-being that can enhance other deradicalization efforts by improving their psychological resilience and preventing grievances over vulnerability. Support for host communities can mitigate potential resentment toward refugees, which can radicalize refugees. Positive interactions between

refugees and host communities can prevent mutual radicalization of hosts who resent refugees as intruders and refugees who feel alienated. Camp security has several basic dimensions, including securing camps from external and internal threats, supporting host communities, enabling self-governance of refugees with regard to camp conditions, and limiting the time refugees remain in the camps.

### *Security from External Threats*

In some cases, like Rwanda and Pakistan, militant leaders infiltrated IDP and refugee camps to recruit fighters using the promise of a regular salary, which acts as an opportunity for camp occupants to improve their socioeconomic standing but also increases the risk of radicalization (Hellsten & Nordisk, 2016; Sude et.al., 2015). Similarly, in Sri Lanka, militant group leaders used economic and psychological insecurities to militarize camp occupants and recruit soldiers (McDowell, 2018).<sup>5</sup> A constant presence of militants close to refugee camps, as demonstrated by Boko Haram in Nigeria, can weaken camp security and heighten insecurities felt inside the camps (Nwalieji & Oyebanjo, 2019). Therefore, the physical security of a camp from external threat is essential to counter radicalization and deradicalize or at least disengage extremists in the camp (Joint Publication 3-29; US Army FM 3-39.40).

### *Internal Camp Security*

The security of the refugee community internally is vitally important. Unfortunately, women and children are especially vulnerable to domestic violence and sexual exploitation in refugee camps (Beydoun, 2010; Leenders, 2009; UNHCR, 2019), which undermines their sense of safety and therefore the psychological well-being necessary for their resilience against radicalization. Sometimes, radical groups are able to leverage radicalized ideology that is already present at camps. Al-Hawl is one such example where radicalized ideology has been passed down to children from their mothers, often the wives of ISIS fighters (Zelin, 2019). Refugee camps may also contain members of different communities antagonistic to one another, reproducing ethnic and even extremist divisions in the broader society.

Concerns over radicalization within the camp are warranted. As mentioned, Al-Hawl is experiencing serious disorder, primarily from extremist foreign-born women (Engel et al., 2019). Small groups of individuals within the camps have carried out attacks on members of NGOs, Syrian security guards, and camp members that do not follow ISIS's religious doctrine (Zelin, 2019). Currently, security at al-Hawl is administered by Kurdish security services, who are undermanned and underequipped to manage a camp of its size (Zelin, 2019). USCENTCOM can aid allies like the SDF and host country forces through support and training in camp security and administration in accordance with US doctrine and ethical standards (Joint Publication 3-29; US Army FM 3-39.40).

### *The Relationship Between Host Communities and Refugees*

The UN Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP)<sup>6</sup> highlights three major components of its own resilience plan including localization, financing, and linking to host countries' development agenda (UNDP & UNHCR, 2019). They place a high priority on building host community capacity, and 3RP partner institutions have been working towards that objective. It can also empower civil society groups that are better positioned to help with

<sup>5</sup> In the Sri Lankan case, factors that increased insecurity and enable militant leaders to recruit from IDP and refugee camps included social alienation, discrimination, social exclusion, racism, and poverty.

<sup>6</sup> The UN Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan is defined as a "country driven, regionally coherent planning process. It draws together the national crisis response plans for humanitarian relief, resilience and stabilization in neighbouring countries to Syria, namely, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey, and Egypt, in one coordinated regional framework" (United Nations Development Programme, 2019).



humanitarian and crisis issues (Bloom, 2019). The relationship between host communities and IDP/refugee communities can create tensions, however, as Sude et al. (2015) note, refugees compete for resources and jobs with local host populations, creating an inherent conflict. Further, there is a recognition on the part of extremist groups that “driving and inflaming public distrust of refugee communities and promoting a strong association between refugees and violent extremism help to foster intolerance in host communities” (Comerford, 2017), which alienates refugees from their hosts, creating discrimination and distrust, which in turn creates grievances among the refugee population that can lead to radicalization (Adamu & Rasheed, 2016). The distrust of host communities can lead to conflict; in Lebanon some host municipalities even created their own security forces that allegedly abused refugees (Sude et al., 2015).

Fear of retaliation from a host population that feels threatened by the influx of refugees is a common concern expressed by refugees in camps worldwide (Sude et al., 2015). For example, Kenyan locals, who believed there were more resources being distributed within the Dadaab camp than existed in the surrounding communities, blocked roads in and out of Dadaab, threatening to worsen the already harsh living conditions inside the camp and demanding the surrounding population receive similar non-profit support (Sude et al., 2015).<sup>7</sup> Adding to the already precarious living conditions inside of camps, refugees often venture into local communities searching for short-term jobs in sometimes hostile environments (Nwaleiji & Oyebanjo, 2019).<sup>8</sup> In some cases, weak local governance generated feelings of insecurity and resulted in increased radicalization by VEOs among camp occupants (Sude et al., 2015).<sup>9</sup> Fostering positive relationships between refugees and host communities is an important buffer to grievance and mutual radicalization by both parties.

### *Civil Organizations: Grounds for Conflict and Cooperation*

Informal civil organizations emerge in refugee camps as people struggle to meet their needs and negotiate living with one another. These organizations can improve or complicate life in a camp and consequently influence the vulnerability of refugees to radicalization. Emergent camp leaders can mobilize the camp’s inhabitants to push back against formal structures put in place by governments or NGOs (Clarke, 2018; Javiad, 2016; McDowell, 2018). In the case of al-Hawl, organized extremists can impose restrictions on other refugees and can be a source of radicalization. Alternatively, informal civil organizations in camp can help camp administration. As demonstrated by the Dadaab case, NGOs and even local or national governing bodies in the host countries are often limited in their ability to address camp security without interacting with informal actors (Feller & Akodjenou, 2006). The ability of leaders in a civil organization to mobilize camp members and carry out a coherent strategy is the strongest deciding factor in how well these organizations achieve their objectives. The governing bodies of camps that achieve the greatest level of security among the camp’s population often work with these informal leaders and allow the refugees to form a political voice and in some instances their own justice systems (Sude et al., 2015; Lecadet, 2016).

### *Time in Camp is a Liability for Radicalization*

The risk of radicalization increases the longer people remain in refugee camps. Camps have not only become momentary safe havens for recently displaced peoples but long-term solutions for many; the average stay is

<sup>7</sup> As a result of the pressure placed on the camp by the surrounding population the NGOs attempted to assist the locals with improvements to their banking systems.

<sup>8</sup> Refugees in Nigeria occasionally disappear after leaving the camps to find work. It is assumed many of the women who disappear are victims of human trafficking.

<sup>9</sup> These cases include the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Tanzania.

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seventeen years (Sude et al., 2015). This is further demonstrated by a 2018 survey of IDP camps in northern Syria where most camp occupants have no intention of leaving within a three-year period (UDHR, 2019). The UDHR report points out that refugees even remain in camps that greatly exceed their housing capacity and lack adequate resources to care for all inhabitants. Research has identified length of stay in camp as a risk factor for radicalization (Fayyaz, 2018; Hameon, 2019; Martin-Raygo, 2011). Therefore, the more timely repatriation can happen, the better. Repatriation of foreign fighters from camps to their home countries is a significant policy step that can help defray the responsibilities of the host authorities. Human Rights Watch recommends that, “countries...immediately take all possible steps to ensure that their citizens trapped in any areas of al-Hawl or in other camps or prisons in northeast Syria have a way to request repatriation and expedite efforts to verify citizenship” (2019). This message was echoed in interviews with subject matter experts (Bloom, 2019; O’Neill, 2019). Timely repatriation should also alleviate the stresses of camp life by reducing the overall size of the camp’s population, making it easier to satisfy the needs of the population and to provide the counseling, education, and vocational training necessary for insulating the population from radicalization.

## Section II: How Do You Triage and Segregate Persons in IDP/Refugee Camps That Have Varying Degrees of Radicalization?

Most experts agree that there is a need to screen individuals for radicalization. However, exactly what an assessment represents, how it should be used, who should administer it, and the unintended consequences of assessing people (e.g., community distrust, stigmatization) are contested. Nevertheless, some general guidelines and specific instruments exist for identifying a person’s degree of radicalization. However, such assessments can be easily mishandled, and their implementation raises ethical questions (RTI International, 2018). Furthermore, these instruments were developed primarily for application to prison populations and may not be fully applicable to IDPs and refugees.

### General Guidelines

Several sources suggest common-sense approaches to screening and identifying radicalism. With reference to Somali refugee camps in Kenya, Omwega (2016) cites the following indicators of extremism: expression of support for violence and terrorism, possession of extremist literature, attempts to access extremist websites, possession of weapons, and possession of training materials for terrorism. Acheson (2016), addressing radicalization in European prison populations, cites the following indicators of radicalization: involvement in Muslim criminal gangs, charismatic self-styled imams, aggressive proselytizing, unsupervised worship, inmates trying to segregate together, claims that clothing is religious to prevent search, intimidation of prison imams, exploitation of staff fear of being labeled racist, abuse of attorney-client communication to smuggle illicit materials, and possession of illicit mobile technology. The European Committee on Crime Problems (2016) recommends that extremists should be sorted into three categories: ideologues who may radicalize prisons, followers vulnerable to radicalization, and opportunistic criminals who may use radicalization or membership in a Muslim gang for personal material gain. These general guidelines may help in thinking about what to look for to identify radicalization but cannot provide assessments of how radical an individual is or how likely he or she may act. A set of instruments for providing actual measures of radicalization exist and the rest of this section provides a review of them.

## Extremism and Radicalization Assessment Instruments

RTI International (2018) and RAN (2017) surveyed and assessed evaluation instruments for identifying radicalism and the likelihood of violent extremism in individuals. These instruments are based on factors statistically related to target behaviors and supported by current psychological and social theories. The instruments include: Extremism Risk Guidance Factors (ERG 22+), IAT-8, Multi-level Guidelines (MLG), RADAR, Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol (TRAP-18), the Violent Extremism Risk Assessment-2 (VERA 2), and the Returnee 45 (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Summary of Radicalization Screening Instruments**

Instrument	Assessment	Description
Extremist Risk Guidance Factors (ERG 22+)	Radicalization	22 risk factors grouped into three dimensions, which include engagement (beliefs and motivations), intent, and capability (RTI International, 2018)
Violent Extremist Risk Assessment (VERA-2)	Radicalization	25 risk factors and 6 protective factors categorized into four sections: 1) Beliefs and Attitudes, 2) Context and Intent, 3) History and Capability, and 4) Commitment and Motivation (RTI International, 2018). Translated into multiple languages, facilitating its use with numerous populations (Vidino, 2019)
Multi-level Guidelines (MLG)	Radicalization	Influence of individual and group-level factors on an individual's likelihood to engage in group-based violence (gangs, violent organizations). Individual risk factors—history and previous behavior Individual-Group factors—membership in the group and the attitudes of the individual and his or her role within the group. Group factors—characteristics of the group's culture. Group-Societal factors—interplay between the group and society, including the presence of other groups which may be impacting beliefs or behavior (RTI International, 2018).
RADAR	Pathway to Radicalization	Identifies where in the process of radicalization an individual is based on 15 risk factors across three dimensions: 1) ideology, 2) social relations, and 3) action orientation.
IAT8	Assessment of Deradicalization Programs	Effectiveness of intervention programs for individuals considered radicalized and examines eight risk and protective factors (RTI International, 2018).
Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol (TRAP-18)	Imminent Attack	Based on US Secret Service case studies—examines eight warning behaviors that indicate an imminent attack such as planning, increased violence, fixation on a target, and ten distal factors associated with violent offenders' backgrounds, such as personal grievance, ideological orientation, failure in intimate relationship, criminal record, and mental disorder (RTI International, 2018)
Returnee 45	Evaluation of Returnees	An investigative framework for assessing European returning foreign fighters. It is a checklist of risk factors and protective designed to help tailor interventions for returnees (RAN, 2017)

The ERG 22+, MLG, and VERA-2 serve as assessments of an individual's degree of radicalization. Their dimensions overlap substantially, so that the choice of use should depend on their appropriateness of purpose and availability. The ERG 22+ and VERA-2 are specifically focused on radicalization and are probably preferred, and the VERA-2 appears to be the more broadly applicable (Vidino, 2019). RADAR is more appropriate if the issue is identifying how far along the path to radicalization a person is. And if the concern is with imminent violent action the TRAP-18 would be the most appropriate tool to use. When dealing with fighters who have returned to their

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home countries, Returnee 45 would be most appropriate tool. Finally, if assessing an intervention program is the goal, the IAT8 is the most appropriate tool.

### *Implementation Considerations*

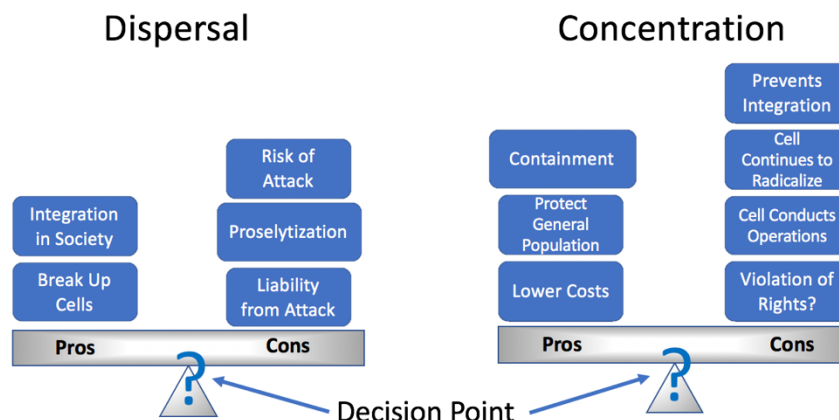
The promise of risk assessment instruments is conditioned by several limitations. First, none has been fully validated to the satisfaction of the professional community (RTI International, 2018); therefore, the results of all need to be taken with caution and balanced with other kinds of assessments (police reports, situation reports concerning the context in which an individual is evaluated). There is debate in the risk assessment community over the validity of using statistical generalizations (e.g., x% of victims seek revenge) to predict individual behavior; advocates of risk assessment instruments counter that the assessments only assess likelihood and are not point predictions that an individual will necessarily act in a certain way (RTI International, 2018). Perhaps the greatest concern is with the professionalism and training of those who would administer the instruments, as all require trained professionals with appropriate backgrounds in criminology, psychology, or other relevant fields (Bloom, 2019; RTI International, 2018). Additionally, context matters. These instruments have been developed in the West to deal with radicalization of Westerners and often on prison populations. The degree to which they can be generalized to non-Western and/or refugee populations is unknown. Finally, consideration should be given to a population's perception of assessments; if administering assessments increases distrust of authorities, it might actually exacerbate radicalization in that community (Bloom, 2019; RTI International, 2018).

### *To Segregate or Disperse? Professional and Ethical Dilemmas*

Radicalization assessment tools can provide a basis for identifying potentially problematic individuals and indicate appropriate interventions. However, a key determination is whether or not to keep that individual or group in the general population or to segregate them. These concerns can also inform situations where refugees have self-identified along ethnic or radical lines, such as at al-Hawl.

The management of people identified as "radicals" is problematic. Two basic options exist: dispersal and segregation (also referred to as concentration or isolation). The European Committee on Crime Problems (2016) and RTI International (2018) provide a review of the pros and cons of these approaches (see Figure 2). Dispersal breaks up radical cells and embeds radicalized individuals in the general population. The benefit of dispersal is that it places an individual in a social context where mainstream influences may help deradicalization and potentially integrate the individual in the broader society. However, dispersal places the general population at risk of attack and provides opportunities for radicals to proselytize and radicalize that population. Segregation concentrates radicals and isolates them from the broader population. The benefit of segregation is that problematic individuals can be contained, protecting the general population from their influences (Ruschenko, 2018). However, segregating radicals enables cells to form in which individual radicalization is reinforced, preventing deradicalization and integration back into society, and can enable radical cells to mobilize and direct operations outside of their confined context. Dispersal and segregation raise ethical issues as well: dispersal places a broader population at risk and segregation raises concerns over equal treatment.

## Picking Your Poison: Dispersal vs. Concentration



**Figure 2. Dispersal vs. Concentration**

Though separating hardline residents from non-radicalized residents, as has been done in al-Hawl, seems effective, it potentially violates the duty of care standards of NGOs and international organizations (Alloush, 2019). Organizations such as the Norwegian Refugee Council and the International Committee of the Red Cross caution against countering violent extremism work in camps in order to maintain impartiality. Further, the perceptions of radicalization itself are subjective and can also lead to unfair labeling and stigmatization (Alloush, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2019).

Several seminal studies have examined the effectiveness of segregation and dispersal and no consensus exists as to their relative effectiveness (Vidino, 2019; Thompson, 2018; RTI International, 2018; European Committee on Crime Problems, 2016); the pros and cons appear to balance one another out. Mixed strategies are possible. For instance, Australian authorities concentrate the most radical individuals and disperse others (Thompson, 2018). Even though a mix of strategies may be employed, it remains a mix between two fundamental approaches, and the appropriate mix or adoption of a single strategy must be chosen with the understanding that a particular strategy will control some factors and relinquish others in counter-radicalization interventions.

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